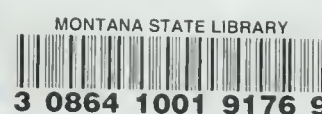


Value Added NEWSLETTER



Montana Department of Agriculture

January - February 2003

If one advances in the direction of his dreams, one will meet with success unexpected in common hours.
-Henry David Thoreau-

Export Opportunities

Whether you are expanding in existing markets, looking for new markets or would like to test export markets, 2003 has a busy schedule of trade shows and other export opportunities coordinated by the Montana Department of Agriculture and the Western United States Agricultural Trade Associations. Montana will be taking the lead on activities in Canada and Japan. For more information on international trade shows, the marketing opportunities, and Export Readiness Seminars, contact Sarah Goan at 406-444-2402 or email agr@state.mt.us.

Sixth annual Made In Montana Food and Gift Show Accepting Buyer Registrations

A wide variety of Made In Montana food and gift products from across the state will be assembled again at the highly successful Made In Montana Food and Gift Show, scheduled for April 2003 in Great Falls, Mont.

The sixth annual Made In Montana Food and Gift Show will be open to buyers only on Friday, April 4, 2003, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Great Falls Civic Center.

"Unquestionably, this is the largest collection of Made In Montana food and gift products under one roof," says Montana Department of Agriculture Director Ralph Peck. "Wholesale buyers of specialty food and gift products can't afford to miss this event."

Co-sponsored by the Montana Department of Commerce and the Montana Department of Agriculture, the event highlights over 500 distinctive Made In Montana food and gift products to buyers from all over the United States. Products are as varied as clothing, jewelry, art, furniture, pasta, confections and many other specialty food items.

"This show enables buyers to go to one location and choose from a smorgasbord of Montana food and gift products," says Mark Simonich, director of the Montana Department of Commerce. "Montana is synonymous with quality and buyers are sure to be pleased with the show's selection this year."

Admission to the show is free for buyers who have pre-registered by the March 17, 2003, deadline. Pre-registration also includes free admission to the Made in Montana reception, where buyers will have the opportunity to sample gourmet Made In Montana foods and meet with exhibitors.

To pre-register, or for more information on attending the sixth annual Made In Montana Food and Gift Show as a wholesale buyer, contact Angelyn DeYoung at the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-2402, or by e-mail at agr@state.mt.us.

Made In Montana program participants interested in receiving an exhibitor application should contact Rebecca Baumann, Montana Department of Commerce at (406) 841-2756 or via e-mail at rbaumann@state.mt.us.

A list of exhibitors from last year's show is available from the Business Assistance page of the Montana Department of Agriculture web site at <http://www.agr.state.mt.us/>.

Montana Department of Agriculture Showcases Montana Agricultural Products

The Montana Department of Agriculture will host the Montana Agricultural Showcase; January 27 and 28, 2003, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Capitol rotunda. Over 200 products from throughout Montana will be displayed for the duration of the showcase, including pasta, breads, seasonings, flour and retail-packaged wheat.

This showcase, celebrating the diversity of Montana's agricultural industry, gives the public and legislators a chance to view the bounty of our state's largest industry. Each day, different food and beverages, such as bagels, jam, meat products, water and coffee, will be available for tasting. Other agricultural products such as wool blankets, soaps, lotions and candles will also be displayed.

One highlight of the showcase will be the Montana Value-Added Agriculture Success Stories. Sugar Loaf Wool Carding Mill will be there, exhibiting their value-added wool products and how their company has grown with the assistance of the Montana Department of Agriculture. Wheat Montana will also be there, highlighting their value-added wheat products, including bagels and bread.

With questions or inquiries about exhibiting in the showcase, contact Angelyn DeYoung at 406-444-2402 or agr@state.mt.us

Governor Martz Announces Conference on Food Manufacturing and Marketing

Governor Judy Martz invites members of Montana's food manufacturing and marketing industry to participate in the Governor's Conference on Food Manufacturing and Marketing on March 10, 2003, at the West Coast Colonial Hotel in Helena.

The conference will address issues and opportunities identified in the 2001 Governor's Conference on Value-Added Food Processing. Emerging niche markets and selling products outside of Montana will be discussed, as will business tools such as accounting, pricing and financing. Marketing plans, product branding and logo development also will be addressed.

The conference is a venue through which food manufacturing and marketing companies can learn about industry changes and new opportunities to improve their efficiency and effectiveness.

A trade show for Montana suppliers also will take place during the conference. Montana distributors, packaging manufacturers, marketing firms and other input companies will attend the conference to raise awareness of their products and services.

The registration deadline is February 17, 2003. For more information about the Governor's Conference on Food Manufacturing and Marketing or for questions about registration, contact Angelyn DeYoung at the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-2402, or by e-mail at agr@state.mt.us.

2003 Trade Shows

Specialty Food Industry

7-10	Feb	Billings Market Association	Billings, MT	406-652-6132	Gift & specialty food items.
9-11	Mar	New England Products and Trade Show	Portland, ME	207-781-5756	Gifts and specialty foods

Food Service & Hospitality Industry

1	Mar	Alaska Hospitality & Food Svc. Expo	Anchorage, AK	907-277-7469	Hospitality and food service equipment
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Grocery & Convenience Store Industry

26-28	Feb	AWMA Real Deal Expo	Las Vegas, NV	202-463-2124	Convenience store items
15-18	Feb	Snaxpo 2003	San Francisco, CA	703-836-4500	Snack industry
10-12	Mar	Host Midwest Expo	Milwaukee, WI	800-589-3211	Food and beverage industry
11-14	Mar	Foodex Japan	Chiba, Japan	+81 3 3434 3453	Food and beverage industry

Gift Industry

19-21	Feb	Westpack	Anaheim, CA	310-996-9466	Packaging
23-25	Feb	Marketechnics	Dallas, TX	202-463-0802	Food service technology
1	Mar	Alaska Hospitality & Food Svc Expo	Anchorage, AK	907-277-7469	Hospitality and food service equipment
1	Mar	Food Safety Summit and Expo	Washington, DC	800-746-9646	Quality control svcs, etc. for food industry
23-24	Mar	Greater Pittsburgh Restaurant & Food Svc	Pittsburgh, PA	800-346-7767	Equipment and svc for food industry

Natural & Organic Trade Shows

13-15	Feb	BioFach 2003	Nuremberg, Germany	+49 911 86060	Organic products
6-9	Mar	Natural Product Expo West	Anaheim, CA	866-458-4935	Natural products

Industry-Specific Trade Shows

13-15	Feb	Billings Home and Garden Show, etc.	Billings, MT	406-651-0440	Home and garden services and supplies
1	Mar	Branding America	Baltimore, MD	703-488-2700	Branding, product placement
11-13	Mar	Int'l Boston Seafood Show	Boston, MA	207-842-5500	Seafood

Financial Deadlines

April 30	GTA Investment App. Deadline	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Value-added financial assistance.
April 30	Trade Show Assistance App. Deadline	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Financial assistance to attend shows.

*Please contact the Montana Department of Agriculture for more information.

+For international calls, please contact your local telephone company for dialing information.

+For website information about each trade show, please refer to the Department's website at www.agr.state.mt.us.

Trade Show Assistance Program

Are you planning to attend a wholesale trade show this year? The Montana Department of Agriculture Trade Show Assistance Program helps agricultural companies attend domestic trade exhibitions to develop existing markets and access new ones.

The department's Trade Show Assistance Program provides Montana agricultural companies with assistance to participate in trade promotion shows in the United States. Eligible companies can apply for financial support for a percentage of the cost to participate in upcoming trade exhibitions up to \$1,000.

Financial assistance is just one benefit of the Trade Show Assistance Program. The department's marketing staff can also assist Montana companies with many aspects of attending domestic trade shows, such as helping a company to identify the best trade opportunities to access their intended market. Trade exhibiting tips are also available for companies to use.

Applications for the spring quarter are due by April 30, 2003. Deadlines are quarterly and fall on January 31, April 30, July 31 and October 31 annually. For an application or for more information on the Trade Assistance Program, contact Angelyn DeYoung at (406) 444-2404, or by e-mail at agr@state.mt.us. Program guidelines and trade show exhibiting tips are available at the Montana Department of Agriculture's web site at <http://www.agr.state.mt.us>.

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Value Added NEW S L E T T E R

Montana Department of Agriculture

March-April 2003

"The best preparation for tomorrow is to do today's work superbly well." -Sir William Osler-

USLGE ANNUAL MEETING

The 2003 annual meeting of U.S. Livestock Genetics Export, Inc. (USLGE) took place in Las Vegas, Nevada January 29-31, 2003. USLGE is a nationwide livestock-specific, not-for-profit, trade association representing the international market development interests of the U.S. dairy, beef, sheep, swine and horse breeding industries. Their representation encompasses the embryo and semen industry, livestock export sector, plus leading state Departments of Agriculture from top livestock producing states across the United States.

USLGE staff, in addition to staff members from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S.-China Agricultural Economic & Trade Promotion Council and U.S. Holstein Association presented an array of useful information at the seminar. Topics included: global marketing strategies, a national animal identification and tracking system, international livestock market development and USDA support of U.S. livestock market activities.

USLGE members in attendance came from across the U.S. from several state departments of agriculture and private livestock industry organizations. The annual meeting provides members a chance to discuss livestock marketing ideas with other industry leaders, while gaining insight on Unified Export Strategy applications. Members fill out applications through USLGE to receive funding from USDA's Foreign Ag Service to perform international marketing activities. Monies are granted based upon activity descriptions, market potential and constraints, past results and strategic planning.

Misti Pilster, Livestock & Meat Marketing Officer for the Montana Department of Agriculture, attended the seminar. For more information contact Misti Pilster at (406) 444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING WUSATA BRANDED PROGRAM 2003-2004

It's that time of the year again. WUSATA will soon begin the pre-qualifying process for Branded Funds application for FY2003-2004. This year's timeline is as follows:

April – June	Applicants Pre-Qualify
July 1 st	Application Deadline
August	States rate applications
September	Dollars allocated
October 1 st	Program Year begins
September 31 st , 2004	Program Year ends
November 30 th , 2004	Final Claims due

A Branded Program seminar will be held in Boise, Idaho, on April 16, 2003. This is a good opportunity for all companies planning foreign market activities, from first-timers to those expanding their portfolio of export markets. For details and to sign up, contact Alexa Hamilton, Branded Programs Director, WUSATA, at 360-693-3373 or by email alexa@wusata.org. One of this year's many updates and improvements to the program is a fully automated application process via WUSATA's website.

The Branded Program is a cost-share funding program that supports the promotion of brand name* food and agricultural products in foreign markets. By providing participants with 50 percent cost reimbursement for eligible marketing and promotional activities, this program enables companies to effectively break into new foreign markets. (*The term "brand name" is used loosely here. Companies promoting products via private label and bulk sales are often eligible.)

For more information on the Branded Program and its use in Montana, contact Sarah Goan, the Department's International Marketing Officer, at (406) 444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

MONTANA -ALBERTA AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITIES CONFERENCE

The Montana Department of Agriculture and Alberta Agriculture Food & Rural Development will hold the biennial Montana - Alberta Agriculture Opportunities Conference on June 16 and 17, 2003 in Great Falls, MT. This conference is an opportunity for agricultural businesses, trading partners, and producers to gather information and address trade issues between Montana and Alberta. The conference also serves as a forum for the respective industries to provide guidance and recommendations to state and provincial agricultural trade policy makers. Agenda topics include crop and pesticide harmonization, livestock and animal health, agribusiness and transportation. There will also be panel discussions regarding exchange rates and their impacts, and domestic support and subsidies to agriculture producers.

SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING

The Small Business Administration (SBA) offers a 504-loan program to those entrepreneurs requiring a loan guarantee larger than \$500,000. This long term financing program provides long-term fixed-rate financing for land and buildings. The borrowers have to be able to prove that the intended loan will have a favorable economic impact such as new job creation, etc. Exceptions do exist for businesses owned by veterans, women and others. For more information, contact your local SBA office at www.sba.gov.

2003 Trade Shows

Specialty Food Industry

2-5	Apr	Made In Montana Show	Great Falls, MT	406-841-2756	Specialty food & gift products
25-27	Apr	Billings Market Association	Billings, MT	406-652-6132	Gift & specialty food items
4-6	May	Fancy Food and Confections	Chicago, IL	212-482-6440	Gourmet and confections
4-7	May	Gourmet Products Show	San Francisco, CA	800-272-SHOW	Gourmet food

Food Service & the Hospitality Industry

22-24	Jun	Southwest Foodservice Expo	Dallas, TX	800-295-2872	Food service industry
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Grocery & Convenience Store Industry

4-6	May	US Food Export Showcase	Chicago, IL	703-876-0900	Food and beverage products
7-9	Jun	Good Food Show	South Melbourne	61-3-9261-4500	Food industry
9-10	Jun	SnackEx 2003	Barcelona	020 7611 4660	Snack industry

Gift Industry

29-1	Mar/Apr	Boston Gift Show	Boston, MA	914-421-3200	Gourmet and gift items
17-20	May	Int'l Jewelry Fair/Gen Merch.	New Orleans, LA	630-241-9865	Jewelry and general merchandise

Natural & Organic Trade Shows

24-27	Apr	Canadian Health Food Expo	Vancouver, BC, Canada	905-479-6939	Natural products industry
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Industry-Specific Trade Shows

19-20	Mar	Private Label Expo	Las Vegas, NV	702-893-9090	Private labeling
25-27	Mar	International Pizza Expo	Las Vegas, NV	812-949-0909	Pizza
4-6	May	FMI Supermarket Industry Convention and Educational Exposition	Chicago, IL	202-220-0802	Tech., equip., packaging, consumer goods
7-10	May	National Craft Brewers	New Orleans, LA	303-447-0816	Brewing industry
15-18	May	Mobile Industrial Caterers	New Orleans, LA	714-632-6800	Catering industry

Financial Deadlines

July 31	GTA Investment App. Deadline	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Value-added financial assistance.
July 31	Trade Show Assistance App. Deadline	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Financial assistance to attend shows.

*Please contact the Montana Department of Agriculture for more information.

+For international calls, please contact your local telephone company for dialing information.

+For website information about each trade show, please refer to the Deptment's website at www.agr.state.mt.us.

U.S. SUPPLIER LIST ONLINE

A "one-stop" information source for U.S. exporters and international buyers to research, plan, and evaluate potential trade opportunities. For information, go to National Association of State Departments of Agriculture's website at <http://www.nasda.org/>. Copies of the Foreign Agricultural Service's publication, "Exporter's Matrix: Handbook for U.S. Agribusinesses," can be obtained by contacting NASDA at (202) 296-9680.

SAVE THE FAMILY FARM: GRANTS AVAILABLE TO NON-PROFITS

A source of grant funding can be found through the FARM AID organization. The mission of FARM AID is to help maintain the family farm system of agriculture in America. Grants are given to nonprofit organizations that provide emergency assistance for farm families, and to organizations concerned with developing long-term solutions to farmers' problems. FARM AID grants fall under five categories: emergency needs, advice hotlines, legal aid, education, and outreach/organizational development. Proposals are accepted at any time and are considered according to the availability of funds. Grants range between \$2,500 and \$60,000. For full program details visit the following website. <http://www.farmaid.org/org/mission/grants.asp>

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Value Added NEWSLETTER



Montana Department of Agriculture

May-June 2003

"Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another." Walter Elliott

Tri-national Accord Meeting Held in Montreal

Continuing a long-standing province/state relationship among Canada, the United States and Mexico, the Province of Quebec hosted the 13th annual meeting of the Tri-National Accord in Montreal April 1-3, 2003. Secretaries, commissioners, directors, ministers of agriculture, plus senior government officials from nine Canadian provinces, 15 U.S. states and nine Mexican states worked together to improve understanding and strengthen collaboration among the agricultural sectors for the three NAFTA countries. Among the 15 U.S. states, Director Ralph Peck and Meat and Livestock Marketing Officer Misti Pilster attended the sessions as representatives of the Montana Department of Agriculture.

Director Peck, who is currently serving as a co-chair on the U.S./Canada Working Group, and Pilster participated in meetings related to U.S./Canada trade issues. Working Group members began their meeting with reports from federal officials regarding the activities and accomplishments of the U.S./Canada Consultative Committee on Agriculture. The report covered a range of issues including progress toward year-round movement of feeder cattle, pesticide harmonization, modifications of the administration of the ministerial exemption procedure for bulk commodity shipments, and more timely mechanisms for resolving technical trade disputes. Delegates also agreed to work together to encourage the U.S. and Canada to move in a parallel manner on science-based approval of new biotechnology products without compromising the marketability of those products. Country of Origin Labeling issues were also a topic of discussion. The panel discussed strategies that deal with cost, traceability and liability issues for meat and seafood products in a mandatory system that goes beyond that for fresh fruits and vegetables. The Canadian and U.S. delegations also agreed on the importance of protecting the security of the North American food supply and the need to coordinate the role of states and provinces.

For more information, please contact the Department's Meats and Livestock Marketing Officer, Misti Pilster at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

Made In Montana Food & Gift Show

The sixth annual Made In Montana Food and Gift Show, held in Great Falls, April 4-5, 2003 was a resounding success. Over 35 Montana agriculture companies interacted with nearly 400 wholesale buyers from Montana, New York, Washington and Wyoming. Merchandise exhibited at the show ranged from condiments, breads and wool items to snacks, beverages and meat products. The public day on Saturday brought in a record-breaking 2,500 adults to the show. Thanks to all the vendors for helping to make this year's show a success. Questions? Contact Angelyn Deyoung at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@stat.mt.us.

Montana's Choice Promotions

The Montana Department of Agriculture is gearing up for the 2003 Montana's Choice promotion. The Montana's Choice program is designed to increase sales of Montana food products in grocery stores throughout the state. The promotion works to inform consumers of the availability of Montana grocery products through product identification in the store.

This promotion is for Montana companies with Montana-made products sold in grocery stores. Involvement in the in-store promotions is encouraged at all participating stores in which a company's product is currently sold. Governor Judy Martz will kick-off the promotional events at 10 a.m., May 9, 2003, at Van's Thriftway in Helena. We look forward to both the Governor and Lieutenant Governor participating in the other scheduled events when possible. Contact Angelyn DeYoung at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us with questions or for a participation application.

Montana's Choice In-Store Promotion Itinerary

Day	Date	Store	City
Friday	May 9, 2003	Van's Thriftway	Helena
Saturday	May 17, 2003	County Market	Bozeman
Saturday	May 24, 2003	Albertson's	Missoula
Saturday	May 31, 2003	Albertson's	Butte
Saturday	June 7, 2003	County Market	Billings
Sunday	June 8, 2003	County Market	Miles City
Saturday	June 14, 2003	Albertson's	Great Falls
Saturday	June 28, 2003	Tidyman's	Kalispell

EVENTS

Montana-Alberta Agriculture Opportunities Conference: USDA Farm and Foreign Agriculture Services Under Secretary J.B. Penn is scheduled as a speaker for the Montana-Alberta Agriculture Opportunities Conference in Great Falls at the Heritage Inn, June 16 and 17, 2003, as are numerous other agricultural and trade experts. This conference is a very good opportunity for producers and industry members to discuss trade issues between Montana and Alberta. For more information on participation look for your registration packet in the mail or contact the department at 406-444-2402 or email at agr@state.mt.us.

A USDA Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) listening session is set to take place in Billings at the Holiday Inn, June 6, 2003 from 1-4 p.m. In October of 2002, the USDA established voluntary guidelines for the COOL provision of the 2002 Farm Bill. Mandatory guidelines for COOL are set to be in place September of 2004. For more information please contact Misti Pilster, the Department's Meat and Livestock Marketing Officer, at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

2003 Trade Shows

Specialty Food Industry					
22-24	Aug	Billings Market Association	Billings, MT	406-652-6132	Gift & specialty food items.
Food Service & the Hospitality Industry					
22-24	Jun	Southwest Foodservice Expo	Dallas, TX	800-295-2872	Food service industry.
Grocery & Convenience Store Industry					
7-9	Jun	Good Food Show	South Melbourne, AUS	61-3-9261-4500	Food industry.
9-10	Jun	SnackEx 2003	Barcelona, Spain	020 7611 4660	Snack industry.
29-3	Aug/Sep	Fine Food Australia	Sydney, AUS	+613 9261 4500	Food and beverage.
31-3	Aug/Sep	Supermarker Australia	Sydney, AUS	+613 9261 4500	Supermarket and C-store exb.
Gift Industry					
17-20	May	Int'l Jewelry Fair/Gen. Merch.	New Orleans, LA	630-241-9865	Jewelry and general merchandise.
Industry-Specific Trade Shows					
7-10	May	National Craft Brewers	New Orleans, LA	303-447-0816	Brewing industry.
15-18	May	Mobile Industrial Caterers	New Orleans, LA	714-632-6800	Catering industry.

Financial Deadlines

July 31	GTA Investment App. Deadline	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Value-added financial assistance.
July 31	Trade Show Assistance App. Deadline	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-44-2402	Financial assistance to attend shows.

*Please contact the Montana Department of Agriculture for more information.
 +For international calls, please contact your local telephone company for dialing information.
 +For website information about each trade show, please refer to the Deptment's website at www.agr.state.mt.us.

Grants Available for Renewable Energy Projects

USDA has \$23 million available for renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements for agricultural producers or rural small businesses. Grant funds are available for up to 25 percent of project costs, and amounts range from \$10,000 to \$250,000 for energy efficiency improvements. The following link will lead to more details:
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/nofas/2003/rep040803.pdf>.

Through the Biomass Research and Development Initiative, \$21 million in grants are available to eligible entities to carry out research, development and demonstrations on biobased products, bioenergy, biofuels, biopower and related processes.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, on behalf of USDA and Department of Energy, is requesting proposals for biomass research, development and demonstration projects. The solicitation package (USDA-GRANTS-031803-001) is posted on the federal funding opportunities website at <http://www.fedgrants.gov> and in more detail at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov> and <http://www.bioproducts-bioenergy.gov/>.

Now on the WTO Website

WORLD TRADE POINT FEDERATION WEBSITE

The new World Trade Point Federation website offers trade contacts and information, which will be of particular interest to small and medium size companies wanting to develop export opportunities. Find out more at <http://www.wtpfed.org/newsite/index1.php>.

NEW ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE FORUM MAGAZINE

A new issue of International Trade Forum - the quarterly magazine of the International Trade Center - is available at <http://www.tradeforum.org>.

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Value Added NEWS LETTER

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July/Aug 2003

Montana Department of Agriculture

July-August 2003

There is nothing more difficult...than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.
Niccolo Machiavelli

Letter From the Director

As part of our effort to promote and enhance agriculture, Montana's number one industry, the department recently hosted the third Montana-Alberta Agriculture Opportunities Conference in Great Falls. The conference provided a venue for producers, industry leaders and government officials to discuss trade between Montana and Alberta. The more than 100 agricultural leaders attending the conference also had an opportunity to listen to experts on both sides of the border regarding trade issues such as animal health, transportation, legislative issues, and regulations. Montana and Alberta have many things in common. Although we have some new challenges, producers and consumers on both sides of the border benefit from a free and fair trade. Enhancing trade for our integrated agricultural industries is vital to maintaining the strength of Montana's agricultural economy. The Montana Department of Agriculture remains committed to protecting and enhancing all agriculture in Montana while continuing to foster positive relationships with our trading partners. Please do not hesitate to contact the department for your agriculture marketing and business development needs; our staff is knowledgeable and always willing to assist.



Sincerely,

Ralph

International Malting Company Breaks Ground in Great Falls

On July 2, 2003, Governor Judy Martz and Director Ralph Peck joined International Malting Company (IMC) officials in Great Falls for groundbreaking ceremonies. IMC is a subsidiary of Lesaffre International, a family owned firm specializing in yeasts, malt barley, and other products used in food manufacturing. Lesaffre International Chairman Maurice Lesaffre and his son Damien Lesaffre, President of International Malting Company, expressed a great deal of appreciation for the work that had been done to bring IMC to Great Falls.

Representatives of IMC first met with officials from the City of Great Falls, Cascade County and the Montana Department of Agriculture in October of 2001, and discussed the possibility of developing a malting facility in the State. Since that time, IMC, companies and citizens, city, county, state and federal officials have all worked cooperatively to make land and water available for the project, and have walked through the financial, legal and regulatory aspects that must be in place to ensure the project meets its targets and deadlines.

IMC's facility will result in new jobs for Great Falls and Cascade County and will enable Montana to process between 12 and 16 million bushels of its malt barley annually when it is completed. In addition to the obvious benefit of added processing and job creation, the facility also helps producers. Having a malting facility in their backyard allows producers to enjoy reduced freight costs on their crop. The freight savings and stable demand for barley in area will make a lot of producers more secure as they consider cropping choices. Additional impacts, such as livestock feeding with malting by-products and feed barley that didn't make malt quality, or brewing with identity preserved Montana malt, are expected to develop.

It has taken a lot of hard work and cooperation to arrive at this point, but the message is loud and clear. Montana is a competitive place to do business, and our collective effort at agricultural and economic development in the state is paying off.

Agriculture Development Council Meeting

The Montana Agriculture Development Council is set to meet in Sidney, Montana, August 11-14, 2003, to review the most recent round of Growth Through Agriculture (GTA) program applications that meet the July 31, 2003, deadline.

The GTA program provides funding through investments and loans that assist Montana agribusinesses develop agricultural ventures and market value-added agricultural products. The Montana Agriculture Development Council oversees the GTA program, and is a five-member council comprised of farmers, ranchers and agricultural business people as well as the directors of the Montana Department of Agriculture and the Montana Department of Commerce.

The current quarterly GTA deadline is July 31, 2003. For more information please contact Quinn Holzer, GTA Program Manager at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

Do You Sell Product In Canada?

A final rule requiring nutrition labeling of all prepackaged foods has been issued by Canada's Department of Health, and companies doing business in Canada must be in compliance by December 12, 2005. To help firms gear up for this change, the Food Institute has published a *Primer on Canadian Nutrition Labeling*, authored by Olsson, Frank & Weeda, PC. Log on to www.foodinstitute.com/anadianlabeling.cfm?storeid=2&AFID=6 to order your copy. For more information please contact Sarah Goan, Marketing Officer for the Montana Department of Agriculture at 406-444-2402 or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

2003 Trade Shows

Specialty Food Industry

22-24	Aug	Billings Market Association	Billings, MT	406-652-6132	Gift & specialty food items.
24-26	Oct	Billings Market Association	Billings, MT	406-652-6132	Gift & specialty food items.

Equipment and Packaging

31-3	Aug/Sep	Hotel Australia	Sydney, AUS	+613-9261-4500	Hotel and restaurant equipment.
5-8	Sep	NAFEM 2003	New Orleans, LA	312-245-1054	Food service equipment.

Grocery & Convenience Store Industry

29-3	Aug/Sep	Fine Food Australia	Sydney, AUS	+613-9261-4500	Food and beverage.
31-3	Aug/Sep	Supermarket Australia	Sydney, AUS	+613-9261-4500	Supermarket and C-store.

Other Events

15	July	Writing a Business Plan	Missoula, MT		SBDC Training.
11-14	Aug	Ag Development Council Mtg.	Sidney, MT		Growth Through Agriculture Meeting.
14	Aug	Evaluating a Business Idea	Hamilton, MT		SBDC Training.
14	Aug	Marketing By The Numbers	Hamilton, MT		SBDC Training.
19	Aug	Evaluating a Business Idea	Missoula, MT		SBDC Training.

Financial Deadlines

July 31	GTA Investment App. Deadline*	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Value-added financial assistance.
July 31	Trade Show Assistance App. Deadline*	MT Dept. Agriculture	406-444-2402	Financial assistance to attend shows.

*Please contact the Montana Department of Agriculture for more information.

+For international calls, please contact your local telephone company for dialing information.

+For website information about each trade show, please refer to the Deptment's website at www.agr.state.mt.us.

Country of Origin Labeling Listening Session Held in Billings

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosted the eighth of twelve listening sessions on Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) in Billings, Montana on Friday, June 6, 2003. Listening sessions were held across the country to provide all segments of the agricultural industry with an opportunity to comment on how USDA should best implement the COOL law which was part of the 2002 Farm Bill.

Under the COOL provision, covered commodities include muscle cuts of beef, lamb and pork, fish, fresh fruits and vegetables, and peanuts. Currently, the provision is voluntary, but after September 30, 2004, retailers will be required to provide information to consumers as to the origin of those covered commodities.

In announcing the listening sessions, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman said the intention of the forums was to educate the public about the law and to seek additional ideas about how best to implement COOL without an "undue burden" on producers, processors and grocers.

Montana Department of Agriculture Director Ralph Peck noted, "We have been following the process closely to make certain that the law is implemented in a way that meets the needs of producers and the nation without creating a huge amount of paperwork."

Approximately 90 people signed up to testify at the Billings hearing, but due to time constraints, only 66 individuals spoke. Transcripts of oral and written testimony from each listening session will be available in coming months on the USDA website at www.ams.usda.gov/cool.

For more information about the listening sessions, see the USDA website, or contact Misti Pilster, livestock marketing officer at the Montana Department of Agriculture at (406) 444-2402, or by email at agr@state.mt.us.

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